Why Foreign Missions Cannot Retrench on Account of the War

By Arthur Judson Brown

1. Because the work has been built up through a long series of years and cannot be hurriedly adjusted to temporary conditions in America. A mill can be shut down for a while or run at half capacity and return at any time to full operation; but not a long and laboriously developed mission work in non-Christian lands. The Board's business has not fallen off, but is greater than ever. This year's obligations were fixed, within the limit authorized by the General Assembly's Executive Commission, months before the European War broke out and commitments were made that could not be recalled after nearly half of the fiscal year had passed.

2. Because missionaries have been sent out by the Church for life, and cannot be discharged as a merchant can discharge a clerk. The faith and honor of the Church are involved.

3. Because it would be extravagant to dismiss them. An employee in America can be easily replaced, but a missionary is

a highly trained and carefully selected man, transported at heavy cost to the other side of the world, and maintained for three years of study of language and people before he can begin his real work. When he has acquired experience, he represents an investment in money and a developed value for work which it would be wasteful to throw away and later begin all over again with new men.

4. Because there would be no present saving, but on the contrary additional expenditure in recalling missionaries, as they and their families would have to be brought home at large expense.

5. Because our 73 hospitals, our boarding schools for the blind and for deaf mutes, and our asylum for the insane are full of helpless sick and afflicted people who need our care and whom it would be cruelty to abandon.

6. Because our 16 colleges, 87 academies, 1,526 primary and intermediate schools, 59 kindergartens, 115 schools of other kinds, including normal, medical, nurses', theological and Bible-training schools, and 2,773 Sunday-Schools are full of students who represent a great missionary opportunity, and on which we are dependent for the future supply of native preachers and teachers. It would be an

enormous loss of influence and prestige and almost a death blow to the Church of the future to turn them out either to a life of ignorance or to go to anti-Christian schools where they would be educated away from Christ instead of towards Him.

7. Because the work is now conducted in the most economical way consistent with efficiency. The administrative expenditures of the Board last year were 3.64%, and including other disbursements in America required by the General Assembly and the propaganda among the home churches 2.81% more, a total of only 6.45%, which is believed to be the lowest percentage of any large missionary board in the world, and which experienced business men have repeatedly told us is remarkably low as compared with business corporations. Indeed a British missionary director has criticized our Board for being too economical in its administrative expenditures. On the field, the general fact is expressed by the missionary who writes: "We have considered the question of reducing expenses from all sides and can see no way of retrenching unless we stop work, for we have been carrying on this Mission with the least possible expense."

8. Because as a result of many years of toil, our mission work has attained a mo-

mentum that would make retrenchment, or even restriction to the present scale, a disaster from which it could not recover for years. The following table will show the advance during the last decade:

	1904	1914	Per cent. of Increase
Foreign Missionaries...	837	1,226	46½
Native force	2,160	5,766	160
Organized churches ...	400	728	82
Communicants	50,172	133,713	160
Schools	823	1,781	116
Pupils	27,009	64,687	140
Sunday-school scholars.	49,745	154,139	210
Hospitals	43	73	70
Dispensaries	59	100	70
Receipts on field for congregational, educational and medical expenses.....	$117,355	$560,195	377
Per capita	$2.34	$4.18	79
Receipts at home from all sources	$1,068,118	$2,171,260	130
Per capita	$.90	$1.49	66

It will be noted that the income of the Board in this period increased 100%. This is very gratifying, but is it not still more gratifying that the work on the foreign field increased at an average rate of 117%? Our present problem therefore is not one of failure, but of splendid success; the problem of inducing the home Church to keep up with the march of the Kingdom of God on the foreign field.

9. Because the European War has involved the Board in extraordinary expenditures which must be met, increasing the cost of hospital supplies, money exchange, travel, prices of staple commodities, calling for the relief of missionaries of European

Boards whose supplies have been cut off by the war, destroying mission property at some of our stations where the war has involved fighting, and at the same time affecting our income at home by leading givers to be more than ordinarily conservative and by the absorption of popular interest in the worthy efforts to relieve suffering in Europe. Every missionary worker is eager to have all possible help given to war sufferers; but to divert missionary contributions is not to give honestly, as such gifts are really made at the expense of missionaries. Manifestly, too, pledges for a budget made before the war was known will not suffice for the extraordinary conditions which the war has created.

10. Because the home Church is amply able to maintain its foreign missionary work at full strength and to enlarge it even at this time. The derangement of business is bringing temporary loss of income to many persons, but it is bringing increased business to others, while large elements of the population, especially in the agricultural districts and in the Middle and Western States, are unusually prosperous. There is no valid reason for believing that the financial ability of the Church as a whole has been permanently impaired or that it is likely to be.

11. Because even if American Christians were much poorer than they are, gifts to foreign missions form such a tiny proportion of their incomes that it is absurd to urge that it is necessary to lessen them on account of the war or of any financial disturbance. These gifts to our Board from living sources last year were $1,694,464, an average of only $1.16 per member. Will any one seriously allege that doubling this amount would have the slightest appreciable effect upon the income of the average Presbyterian? And yet doubling it would wipe out the deficit, pay the war emergency expenditures, and meet all the obligations of the year. Some people are asking, "Why not use your legacies?" Under the rule of the Assembly and the Board, we are using annually $100,000 from legacies and the interest on the remainder and on the permanent funds of the Board. In addition, the Board is applying, as it applied last year with the approval of the General Assembly, as much of the Kennedy bequest as it is deemed prudent and right to employ in the work of a given year. Our annual budget takes these resources into consideration and still leaves $1,850,000 which must be secured from churches, Sunday-Schools, Women's Societies, Young People's Societies, and individuals, if we are to cancel the deficit and meet the obli-

gations for the year even without making the necessary enlargements contemplated by the Board and approved by the Executive Commission at the beginning of the year. It would be wrong in itself and it would have a dangerous effect upon living testators if it were known that the Board used the legacies of the honored and beloved dead, some of whom made them with knowledge that the Board's policy was that any sum beyond the $100,000 referred to would be used for the strengthening of the work—it would, we say, be wrong in itself and disastrous in its influence to use legacies to make good the failure of the living Church. The deficit which the Board is now carrying is primarily due to the fact that the churches last year fell short of the amount which the Executive Commission and the General Assembly and the Board believed at the beginning of the year that it was reasonable to expect them to give and on the basis of which the Executive Commission and the General Assembly authorized the Board to project its work. The way out of this difficulty is not to depend upon the dead, but upon the living.

12. Because the Church should emulate the example of Christians of former days. Several of the British missionary societies were founded in the period of the French

Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The Baptist Missionary Society of Great Britain made some of its most notable advances during the Crimean and Boer Wars. Some of the strongest societies in America were formed in war times. The foreign missionary work of at least one of the Churches in our Southern States was started in the darkest days of the American Civil War. While the contributions to the northern mismionary societies fell off during the first years of the struggle, they regained their former standard before the war closed, and in some cases exceeded it. Without question, American Christians of to-day can equal the devotion and self-sacrifice of Christians of former days. No concession therefore should be made to a spirit of retreat, but the Church should be confidently expected to address itself with new vigor to the supreme necessities of the hour.

13. Because the Church needs the stimulus of heroic effort and sacrificial giving. There are enormous latent resources in the Church which have hardly been touched by the giving thus far. In the words of Phillips Brooks, "It is not keeping expenses down, but keeping faith and enthusiasm up that gives a clear balance."

14. Because the world conditions precipitated by the war summon the Church to

make its message to men everywhere more strong and compelling, to make Christianity a more vital and virile force, a religion which will affect the whole man, so that he will govern not only his private life but his business relations and his duties of citizenship in accordance with the principles of Jesus. This is not a time to weaken the force of the Christian message by failing to support the work of the Church.

15. Because foreign missions is the antithesis of war, standing for everything in the relations of different peoples which would make war between them impossible, recognizing that whatever the superficial differences, there is in the sight of God only one race and that is the human race, and that men ought to love one another and help one another and not regard one another as rivals or enemies. The missionary enterprise, therefore, stands for world brotherhood and world peace. The only hope of preventing the recurrence of this dreadful war, the only hope for the future is in the universal triumph of this principle.

16. Because the opportunity in non-Christian lands for which the Church has long hoped and prayed and toiled and to which devoted pioneer missionaries consecrated their lives and saw afar by faith has now come. The world is at last open to the

Gospel and ready to hear it. Shall we allow the voice of that Gospel to be drowned by the tumult of warring nations? Shall we not rather make it clearer than ever before? The "Continent" has well said that "the terrific world-crisis now fallen on the nations challenges the universal Church as no other situation in the history of the past 400 years. The conjoint exhibit of moral failure, moral need and moral opportunity in the military tragedy to-day convulsing humanity calls Christians to a supreme test of how much they believe in Christ and how much they will dare and do to make him King and Peacemaker over this distracted earth. If the Church ever intends to vindicate its name among men as the champion of a pure and peaceable religion of heavenly power, now is the time when it must move forward with consecration surpassing all it has shown before. Now is the hour for sacrifice, for devotion that costs, for fidelities unflinching and unlimited. The reason why the knowledge of the Lord must cover the earth as the waters cover the sea is now evident as never before. Nothing less than literal saturation with religion will save the world from such outbreaks as now bathe it in blood. Thin-spread, nominal Christianity is a demonstrated failure. Nothing but the uttermost insistency and persistency of Christians for

the rights and will of their Master can be worthy of their calling and allegiance in this critical juncture of human life. If the earth is to be covered deep with the knowledge of the Lord, the matter to care for first is that the tide shall not be allowed to ebb away from the fields where it now prevails. Recession anywhere now in any religious work would verge on treason."

If the Presbyterian Church is to maintain this position, the Board of Foreign Missions will require for the Deficit carried over from last year the sum of $292,150, for the regular work of this year, which was well under way months before the war was known, $1,859,321. To these sums must be added about $100,000 for the War Emergency Fund—a total of $2,251,471. Manifestly, the ordinary scale of giving will not cover this. Will you not make yours an extraordinary one? The fiscal year is rapidly passing. Will each reader of this leaflet immediately send some gift to Mr. Dwight H. Day, Treasurer of the Board of Foreign Missions, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City. Mention your church or society, and credit will be given to it.

The Board of Foreign Missions of the
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